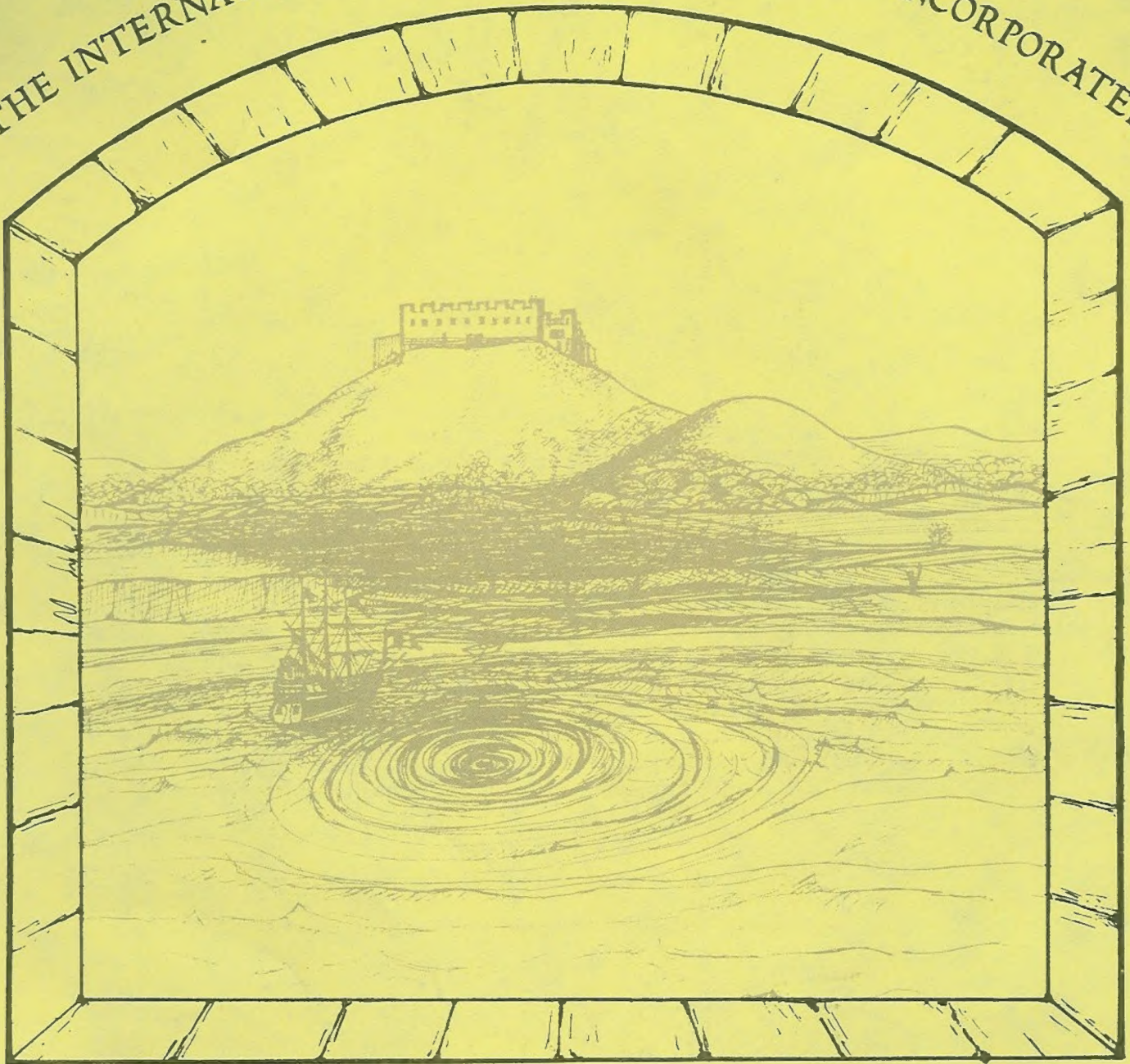


THE INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE OF MARTINISTS INCORPORATED

Worthing - Barbados - West Indies



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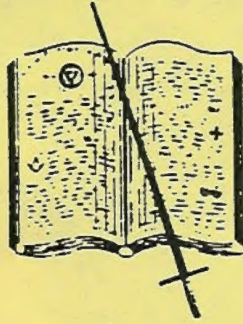
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DEVOTED TO THE ADVANCEMENT AND MYSTICAL ENLIGHTENMENT OF MAN

THE INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE OF MARTINIST STUDIES



Dear Companion

Again, yet again, we remind and admonish you: do not get lost in the intellectual forest! Do not become a sterile academic. Remember you cannot obtain **knowledge** from reading!

Reading can only provide **information**. Persist especially with exercise #1 in Liber 1, exercise #2 in Liber 2, exercise #3 in Liber 4, and EXERCISE "X" ... the practice of the presence of God ... constantly dwell on God, constantly dwell on what you consider God to be, constantly dwell on the attributes of God: compassion, love, beauty, truth, justice, forgiveness and on all that is summed up in the phrase "the Good" ... **strive to manifest these qualities in your life**, in your relationships, in your attitude, your behaviour, your speech....

With all good wishes for your continued advancement on the Path

Sincerely

Sacred

64 00

Disciplina Arcani

Personal & Confidential

Dear Friend

You have now received information on the basic terms of the Ancient Gnosis and it can be realised that these terms are given to the energies and forces at work in the realm of human experience. Organised religion seems to overlook the complexity of the human psyche and reacts when intelligent people refuse to accept limiting dogmas and doctrines of a rigid nature.

Gnostic philosophy is designed so that the follower can see and analyse many peculiar forces at work within the mind and makeup of one's self and others. By recognising the many pitfalls which prevent one from becoming a fully mature person, the easier it becomes to eradicate them.

We can give but a sketchy outline of our work in the lessons and it can be seen that it is only when a student is able to attend the group in person that the full teachings can be given and explained. This is why we give you the opportunity of writing to us personally with your questions or problems.

"The Cosmic Drama" section gives the inner meanings of the Christian mysteries in the light of the Gnosis.

Sincerely yours in the Light,

THE COSMIC DRAMA

Part 1

#238 **CLASSIFIED**

PALM SUNDAY

Palm Sunday begins the real Mysteries of the Christ, but we must refer to the events which lead up to this Holy Week. At the Baptism, the descent of the Divine Soul is seen entering into the Chrestes-Jesus, from then he begins to perform miracles through the Power of the Soul.

At the Transfiguration this union between the human and Divine reaches its height of glory and power, but not quite, the human self is still strong in him and he must turn his face towards the final battle which he must face with the Ruler of the Body.

On Palm Sunday the neophyte is permitted to enjoy his last earthly triumph. In its Gnostic sense it reveals one of the stages along the Path of the Chrestes. This part of the drama is derived from the ceremonies of Initiation as performed within the Mystery Schools of Osiris and Serapis. The entry of Jesus into the city of Jerusalem on two asses symbolises the aspirant being conscious of his two Souls. Bearing in mind that the Greek Sign of Cancer is the two asses, this is both the turning point of the sun's course across the sky and also the turning point of the Soul's earthly career.

At the Transfiguration the Crestes becomes temporarily one with the Christos within and he is acclaimed by the mass of the people, he attains the highest pitch of his glory as the Son of God, but he has not completely conquered his animal self. The drama shows that the priests of the established temple represent this animal nature, with the triumph of the human Soul becoming a danger to the continued reign of the Ruler of the Body. Thus the ruler of the body, being the sub-conscious mind, sometimes called SATAN, fears that the Illumined Soul may disturb the current of respectability which allowed it to float into a position of becoming ruler of the body.

In this Drama, Jerusalem is symbolical of the Heaven or Temple above, and on earth it is the human Temple of the Holy Spirit. The neophyte always rides upon an animal representing the body, this also shows that it is the Divine who always holds the reins of the human personality, whereas, at the dawn of creation, the One fragments Its Life within the limitations of the Waters of Space to become the many, the Divine falls into an earthly sleep and becomes oblivious to its Divine Nature and becomes lost within the waters of the personality.

THE LAST SUPPER

The ceremony of the "Washing of the Disciples' Feet" symbolises the purification of the understanding - or a right understanding of Spiritual Law - and it is necessary to undergo the more advanced initiations into the Christian Mysteries.

Maundy Thursday has always been celebrated as the institution of the Mass or Last Supper which has become the central point of the Catholic Mystery Drama.

The Mystery of the Eucharista is not the sole property of the Christian Church, as Godfrey Higgins has proved that 'the sacrifice of bread and wine was common to many ancient nations'. The Rite of the Eucharista is one of the oldest rites of antiquity. The Gnostic interpretation of this Rite concerned the knowledge of the Divine Nature of Man and its relationship to the man of flesh.

The Bread represents the mortal life of man and the Wine the Essence of the Divine Soul which is sacrificed continually for the nourishment of the man of flesh. The Bread means the regeneration of life from the seed of the Self, and the Wine, the emblem of wisdom and knowledge gained through personal effort by the man of flesh. The Wine also represents the accumulation of experience by man, which causes a fermentation within the Soul and grants to the human Soul strength and knowledge to become as his Father.

Man exists by the continual sacrifice of the Wisdom and Essence of the Soul to nourish our souls and bodies. This ancient sacrifice has many aspects, as we shall see: The wheat typifies the seed of the Divine which is shown in the body at conception and birth, and the energies and forces presented to the human Soul to permit it to germinate and grow. The wine of the grape symbolised the Life of the Soul being poured out into the body for its nourishment.

The Sacrifice of Bread and Wine symbolises the original Fragmentation of the Life of the Supreme Soul at the foundation of the world, to become dispersed within the man as Souls of Men. This Sacrifice is reproduced under physical forms of time and space to act as a constant reminder to us that we are Children of the One Father as Divine Soul, but on the other hand the Father Himself.

Therefore, the Soul or Christos is also compelled to follow in the Father's Pattern, to sacrifice its Life from its own level, to be born in human bodies in order to give life and substance to the mortal Soul. This Christianised Drama of the Cosmic Sacrifice of the Divine God within the limitations of matter, shows that the Christ is the Christos within man, and the Chrestes is the human Soul through which the Christos descends to earth life after life.

We must keep in our mind that this sacrifice of the God-Man is a voluntary one, He dies to his own Glory to fall into earth as men, this means that the God-Man is not a perfect God,† but undertakes this sacrifice and descent in order to realise His own nature and divinity. Thus the Divine Self being fragments of the Essence of the God-Man, also makes a voluntary sacrifice into matter to realise its own Divine Nature, this means that the human Self is utterly unable to end itself, for it can only think in terms of its own continuity.

† The Source of all manifestation is Perfect and Whole but in a time and space sequence we have the appearance of a state of becoming.

Therefore, the Christos-Soul is the Lamb sacrificed from the foundation of the world, dying in very truth from its own Glory, entering into the confines of mortal life to live and die, then to rise triumphant as the Risen Christos. The Drama of the Eucharist is the symbol of this sacrifice of the Higher Self for the lower self. It indicates that when the Christ speaks or acts, he then represents the Divine Soul of Man, and when Jesus speaks and acts, he represents the human Soul.

THE AGONY

The Garden always represents the nature of the human body and the Garden of the Agony is the pinnacle of Wisdom where the neophyte beholds the last and final act in the human destiny of the Soul.

If we look at the story of the Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, we will see that it could not refer to an historical event: Jesus left three disciples sleeping and went further away to pray to his Father, he returned and found them asleep and he spoke to the, he again went to pray for the second time, and he returned to find them sleeping, he again went to pray for the third time and he returned to the sleeping disciples. Now, who was there who recorded the fact that Jesus spoke to his Father and then spoke to the sleeping disciples three times? We are not told, hence it is really a part of the Drama of Initiation.

At the fourth Initiation the Soul has to face the last dregs of the sufferings it has brought upon itself according to the Law. The neophyte must face this Cup before he becomes free from the toils of human evolution.

THE BETRAYAL OF PETER

This part of the ritual has to be enacted by the animal nature, called Patar or Petre in the original. The neophyte must eradicate all attachment to the body of flesh, hence Peter acts in this capacity, first the mental essence denies the Soul, then the emotional nature also denies and finally the physical body rejects the human Soul.* †

To Be Continued

- * In spite of all this drama we should never lose sight of the continual process of transmutation taking place. That which appears base is transformed into more subtle energy.

Nothing is ever lost - even if denied. According to the Jesus prayer in John 17 "nothing is lost save the Son of Perdition". This "Son of Perdition" is the human soul entranced by its illusory concepts of the world.

- † The body should be regarded as an instrument only and not as the self.

Disciplina Arcani

Personal & Confidential

Dear Friend

We can identify the Cosmic Drama with all of the events occurring in the life of the human being. In fact the human is vulnerable to any condition which occurs here in the world.

All around we see death, suffering and discord whilst underneath - silently and unnoticed changes are taking place which lift mankind a little farther into the realisation of the Divine Reality.

It is true that we are, as individuals, involved in a Cosmic Process from which we cannot escape. It would appear that we are trapped in a never-ending series of events which bring nothing but fear to the human. The early Gnostics tried to answer the questions arising from the turmoil of human experience by creating allegories to convey information to the enquiring mind. Why? Why? Why?

Some hypotheses maintain that every thing - pain, joy, suffering and wholeness, all stem from the source - that God punishes and rewards. Others say that suffering is the result of ignorance and sin - perhaps God is punishing us for following the promptings of an opposing force - namely the Devil.

The purpose of the Gnosis is to bring people to the truth about Life. The inner knowledge, or gnosis, is the knowledge that the eternal aspect of the human experience is the Reality of ourselves. The Truth is that we are all "Sons and Daughters" or living intelligent facets of the One Universal Deity. We are the organs and parts of the Cosmic Organism.

The Divine Process is reflected in the human experience and this "God" in each one of us is also reflected in the individual experience of an unfolding life. In miniture we reflect the Cosmic Drama of growth from ignorance to enlightenment - or from death to immortality. Death being no more than a process of re-birthing into new experiences - new forms and a deeper understanding of our individual importance. We are also an essential requisite in the outworking of the Androgyne God to fulfil Itself within the densest aspect of physical light-energy.

Let us go forward then trying to get glimpses of our relationship to the Source of All Things for in all our human 'troubles and trials' we shall emerge complete and fulfilled at the consumation of the Aeon.

Sincerely yours in the Light

THE CRUCIFIXION

We now come to the very heart of the Gnostic Drama of the Christos, wherein the Soul as the Son of God descends into the limitation of the body of flesh and identifies himself with man's suffering and final death as well as with his life and labour, by this means assisting the human Soul to rise from the most finite level of being and human experience to the infinite stage of being the God-Man.

This drama begins with the Divine Victim entering the human temple for the final act of the human Mystery with a triumphal procession, commemorating the entry of the human Soul into the Jerusalem of the human Temple for the Passover Sacrifice which was and ever will be his own crucifixion or Initiation out of the human evolution into that of the Divine Evolution.

We must ever realise that each form of life is the disguise of God, and that life exists because it ever offers itself to Itself, since the food of sacrifice, which is eaten is the disguised God giving himself to the parts to be eaten. (Just as we partaking of the bread and wine, process them through the body to be distributed by the Blood to feed every organ and part - Ed) This means that by the 'death' of the Son of God in matter we are redeemed from the past and granted salvation from the bondage of time.

Psychologically, the above death of the God deprives the physical death, which is so essential to life and its growth, of any particular horror because our mind is no longer obsessed with the desire to accumulate the memories of the past indefinitely. Just as physical death is the instrument of eternal renewal for the Self, so the Sacrifice of God into matter is also the surety of the renewal of manifestation. This 'death' is the wiping away of all memory of past events, which, if we allowed ourselves to accumulate, would strangle all the inherent creative life with a sense of unutterable monotony, by this means the end of the sensory-system called human nature - becomes for it, the end of its time and usefulness for the unfoldment of the Christos.

The Crucifixion, then, means to the Gnostic something very much more than an event occurring once some two thousand years ago, it shows that the Divine Christos does not die a physical death - but that it actually wills to die from eternity into finiteness, it becomes new every moment of time, as St Paul says, "I die daily".* This human Temple is changed and renewed unceasingly at every moment and with every breath, therefore, in the Alpha and Omega we are annihilated in each physical experience and another form resembling it takes its place for the descent of the Christos. The Crucifixion thus becomes for us a constant reminder that the Christos is ever sacrificing its own life for the sake of the human Soul - Jesus.

* I Corinthians 15 : 31

We are not going to waste time in recapitulating some of the many explanations put forward by the metaphysicians for the meaning of the Holy Week, we are going to deal with some of the personal aspects of this grand Drama.

For instance, Peter holds the same office as the Roman myth of Janus. He, like Peter, bears the keys of Alpha and Omega and the Rod which conducts the defunct Soul from the body to heaven. Peter then symbolises the descent and ascent of the human Soul from the casket of flesh. He is also the Sun who rises in the East and sets in the West, but he also controls the descent and ascent of the human Soul downwards into matter and also its ascent at death. This shows that Peter is certainly a myth borrowed from the attributes of Mithra, Janus of Rome and Proteus, the rock of ancient Greece.

The betrayal of Jesus by Judas is certainly based upon the myth of the betrayal of Joseph by his twelve brethren, in which Judas (Gr.Ioudas) figures as the ringleader. We also find the same 'betrayal' figuring in all the religious myths and mystery dramas. The episode simply shows that the human nature of man will always betray the human Soul at the moment of triumph.

The trial before Pilate, the story of the two thieves, the sayings on the Cross, have all the marks of circumstantial fiction or were borrowed wholesale from the older myths. That there was an historical crucifixion, scourging, and mocking, in the person of Antigonus, the last Asmonean King of the Jews, who was slain by Mark Antony, and that such event was grafted onto the story of Jeshu is an undoubted fact.

Philo says that King Agrippa was insulted by the populace at Alexandria, who took a lunatic named Karabbas, dressed him as a mock king, honoured him and hailed him as a king. We must also realise that the story of the crown of thorns, the scourging and the kingly titles is derived from the ancient drama of the Mock King, the sacrificial victim among primitive peoples who died for the salvation of the race or nation, taking upon himself the sins of the race. This simply tells that the self accepts the sins of the human Soul by its descent or crucifixion in matter.

The Ritual of Crucifixion is a very old one, it is to be found in Egypt where the victim representing the Saviour-God was led as a prisoner in procession wearing a crown of thorns, later to die for the good of Egypt. This same story is told of Prometheus, Herackles, Mithra, Adonis and Attis, which certainly indicated the last stage in the Greater Mysteries, when the neophyte had reached the highest stage possible in the earthly Disciplina Arcani.

We are told that in the ancient Babylonian festival of the Sacaea a prisoner condemned to death was dressed in the king's robes, throned, and allowed to deport himself as the king for

five days, after which he was stripped, scourged, and crucified. He died and his blood renewed the life of the nation. We find the same rituals being enacted at Athens, and in the ancient Semitic myth of the sacrifice of the only-begotten son Ieoud by the Father-God Kronos, after a ritual in which the victim is dressed in royal robes. In the old sacrifices by the North American Indians, this same ritual was enacted.

It becomes obvious that from the Semitic myth we have the mock crowning of Jesus and the supposed substitution of the criminal Barabbas or Karabbas, 'Son of the Father', who in the time of Origen was named 'Jesus Barabbas'. Care was also taken by the Semites to remove the body of the crucified victim, some distance away from the scene of death.

The drink of gall comes from the Mysteries of Demeter and Egypt. Here we have the symbol of the final draught of the human law of cause and effect.

The origin of the myth of Jesus carrying his own cross to the place of crucifixion comes from Cyrene which is in Libya, the place of the legendary scene of the pillar-carrying exploit of Herackles, and in Palestine Simon was actually a God-name, representing the ancient Sun-God Semesh, identified with Baal, which again links Baal with the Samson myth. This identification with Baal who carries his pillars crossways, should reveal the figure of Simon the Cyrenean carrying the cross and of Peter being crucified to the same form of cross upside down.

The origin of the Cross itself is absolutely pre-Christian and universal, and was recognised as the symbol of life or immortality. The original Gnostic Cross is shown growing out of the female reproductive organ, and the human Soul - Jesus becomes the 'Christus Pontifex', the Christos who becomes the bridgemaker between heaven and earth upon the Tree of Life which is planted in Golgotha, the Place of the Skull, which is actually the door to this world. The Christos, therefore, becomes the Door which is again Peter, the controller of the Life between heaven and earth.

The Cross as shown on the Catholic Monstrance is the same as the Spinal Tree which shows the seven lamps and the sleeping serpent coiled about the phallus at the base. It is the same as the Wheel of the Law, which shows the Axel Tree or Spinal Tree ascending from the genitalia of woman to the Sun or thalamus in the head, it moves through the heart, which has been called the Light of the World because of the whirling motion of the heart Centre, and then to the Centre of the Cross and is then whirled out into the Beyond by the Whirling Axis of the Body.

The outline of the cross, the tree of the human form, is stretched between the waters of material existence and the heavens of the Divine Self. The Path from the waters to the

thalamus represents the whole course of the Soul's ascent into liberation - from the material waters into which it descended when the Man-God fragmented Itself into terrestrial creation and continuous incarnation. Therefore, the human Soul rising from the waters of sentient existence, passes by the Way of the Cross from the womb of nature up along the Axel-Tree to the Lotus in the skull, the point at which the union of humanity with divinity is finally realised.

The Seamless Garment being rent into the many represents the One, or Whole, of the Indivisible Pleroma, this robe being Universal Light. Whereas, the second robe of Light of the moon is variable and chequered, the former being the Garment of the Soul and the latter the Garment of the Personality. The division of the garment into four parts, shows that the life of the Soul is infused into the four-fold vestures which make up the personality.

The rock burial and resurrection of the Slain God has many meanings, but the whole event is mythological and is derived from the Mysteries of Egypt, Attis and Adonis, Mithras and Demeter. The rock-tomb is the body, the stone which is rolled against the opening symbolising the Cycles of Learning, and the four soldiers representing the four-fold personality. At the resurrection the rock is rolled away showing that the illusion of mortality is finished, the purpose of the personality is finished and the Soul rises from the tomb of matter as the Ascended Master.

The contradictory Christian details of the life and history of their Slain God are to be explained by natural variations from the various mystery systems and dramas. Such circumstantialities give an air of reality to the story so long as their discrepancies are ignored, when this is done the Hylics will accept the pseudo-historical account. It is only when one restores the Gnostic basis to the drama that we find it ceasing to be one in time, but it becomes instead a continuum within ourselves hourly and daily.

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THE SANCTUARY OF THE GNOSIS

MARY MAGDALENE
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#242

CLASSIFIED

Historically it is difficult to state with any absolute certainty any kind of definitive life of Mary Magdalene. However, there are many references and clues to who she was and the role she played as an historic person as well as interesting references to indicate her importance as an allegorical figure for the teaching of spiritual unfoldment.

Let us deal first with the historical aspect using the Bible for reference. Mary Magdalene is mentioned only a few times by name: the first as "the woman from whom seven devils had been cast"; in a list of women who followed Jesus; then several times with respect to her presence at the crucifixion of Jesus, and her place at the tomb as one of the women who went to anoint Jesus' body and subsequently as the one to whom Jesus first showed himself.

There is evidence that Mary Magdalene was also Mary of Bethany and by all accounts this fact was accepted by the Church Fathers Tertullian, St Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, Bede to name a few. If this is the case we have a lot more information about her in the Bible record and it would explain what would appear to be an inconsistency in the fact that Mary of Bethany is mentioned several times as having given hospitality to Jesus, and being present at several important events in his life, but is not mentioned at all in connection with his death and resurrection.

The relationship Jesus had with Mary of Bethany has often been cited as one that only a wife could have had. A study of the customs of the time would substantiate such a claim and this has been written about in several places.

In the account in St. John's Gospel of the raising of Lazarus, Mary is identified as his sister and it goes on to say, "It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick." Tradition says it was Mary Magdalene who anointed Jesus but this is not actually born out in the four gospels which speak of "a woman of the city who was a sinner" at the washing and anointing of Jesus feet, and in the accounts of the anointing of Jesus head just prior to the Passover, as "a woman", or as just "Mary" in John's gospel.

From other records we can find that Mary was of the House of David and was in fact "well connected". There is evidence to suggest her family in fact owned land in and around Jerusalem as well as in Galilee. This fact would account for her being known as both Mary Magdalene (from Magdala on the Sea of Galilee) and Mary of Bethany situated a few miles south of Jerusalem. In St. Luke's gospel mention is made of Mary Magdalene being one of the women who supported Jesus: the list also includes a member of the household of King Herod.

There are other records which relate Mary to Joseph of Arimathea, he was her uncle, and they are reported to have travelled to Britain, to Glastonbury, to carry out their work. After Joseph's death Mary went to France where she died. The recent book "Holy Blood, Holy Grail" mentions Mary as being a key figure in France in the first century and whereas one might not agree with some of the conclusions drawn in the book, it is obvious that such a person did exist and had a profound effect on the people and the thinking of the day.

Many of the churches in France are dedicated to "Our Lady" and it is thought today that that is to The Virgin Mary, or the Mother of Jesus, or the Mother of God. As the Roman Catholic Church did not in fact introduce its present teachings with respect to the Virgin Mary until around the 18th century, this tradition of dedicating the church to "Our Lady" comes from an earlier period and thus indicates an older tradition which would make sense of the place of Mary Magdalene in history.

There are two schools of thought on where Mary Magdalene received her lines of succession. The first, that she and Jesus were the last initiates under the old dispensation and that it was their task to usher in the new; the second, that she received her Hierophantic powers along with the other apostles at the last supper.

A further idea put forward is that she was an initiate of the cult of Ishtar or Astarte - the Mother Goddess and 'Queen of Heaven'. The sacred symbol of Astarte being the Dove - Mary came from Magdala, the village or place of the dove.

Whatever the facts of the matter or the historic events, the various stories fit spiritual allegory and as such make sense and are in no way contradictory; in much the same way as there are other apparent anomalies in the Bible but when understood spiritually are compatible.

If we take only the gospels as our guide with respect to Jesus' appointment of the twelve as apostles and the controversial point as to whether or not he ordained women, it can be found that he commissioned the disciples to teach "the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, cast out demons" and "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel, baptising them in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit". To Peter he said, "Feed my lambs. Feed my sheep." On the other hand the commission to Mary Magdalene was, "go to my brethren and say to them 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God'" or, as in some accounts, she was told by the angel to say "he has risen from the dead." Each commissioning is as valid as the other but Mary's has the deeper import as she was to reveal the resurrection.

Mary went to the disciples and told them of the resurrection but they did not believe her. This reluctance to accept her word is also found in other places including the Gospel of Philip and the Gospel of Mary. In the writings of Robanus a conflict between Mary and the apostles is also recorded and this is a legacy passed on to us today. Many men are still reluctant to accept what women have to say whether in the church or out of it - this is symbolic of mankind's reluctance to listen to its intuition or heed and follow its spiritual insight, preferring instead to rely on the outworkings and methods of the world.

In the unfolding of the gospel allegories at various points 'Mary' is represented as Mother, Sister and Wife and has counterparts in Joseph, Lazarus and John. Allegorically Mary represents the feminine principle Sophia as John represents the masculine principle of Love (agapé). Jesus is the human soul who has to resolve these two principles to attain Christhood. In her literature, Dr Rosa Miller, Hierophant of the Order of St Mary Magdalene, gives the story of how Jesus gave his blessing to the union of John and Mary - thus symbolising the importance of the union of the two principles into one.

By bringing back the feminine principle into the allegory you bring enrichment to the understanding of the outworking of life. In the mass this becomes more clear to you as you see how it is the feminine aspect which, moved by compassion, goes out into the regions of matter and is blinded, she calls upon the Christ who comes down to her and becomes the bridge between heaven and earth bringing healing and lifting her up.

There is a quotation I should like to use here from the church at Rennes-le-Château in France: "From she whom I desire to liberate, there wafts towards me the fragrance of the perfume which impregnates the Sepulchre. Formerly, some named her Isis, queen of all sources benevolent. Come unto me all ye who suffer and are afflicted, and I shall give ye rest. To others, she is Magdalene, of the celebrated vase filled with healing balm. The initiated know her true name; Notre Dame de Cross."

This puts a different interpretation or slant on the concept of Orthodox Christianity of the "suffering servant". This aspect is further emphasised in the document attributed to John the Apostle who depicts Miriam (the Judaic name for Mary) as being present at the crucifixion and in order to give Jesus the hyssop which would alleviate his suffering, she gave herself to the soldiers who guarded him. In this story you are reinforcing the idea of Mary Magdalene as a prostitute but what does this mean with respect to her standing as the symbol for Sophia - Wisdom?

You will see from this that there are many aspects and ideas which we have not explored because we have been conditioned by a one-sided doctrine of the Godhead. This has led us to the position we find ourselves in today and unless we redress the balance we will

find ourselves in even deeper trouble. To answer the world's problems and questions we need to embrace all aspects of life: male and female; good and bad; wise and foolish; loving and hateful, and bring them all under the domination of that which we call "Christ". It has to be done by all of mankind which means men and women in every walk of life.

As we seek to find out about and integrate ourselves with the feminine aspect, or the Goddess, as well as God, we will automatically find a better balance manifesting itself and the place of women in the priesthood will be seen and fulfilled. This later point has been dealt with more fully in our paper "Women in the Priesthood" and is available for those who wish to explore this matter further.

We have then an exciting new era opening before us which challenges the norms of the past and will move us forward to a richer and fuller future.

CLASSIFIED

THE PRIESTHOOD

#243

We have this afternoon been present at the Ordination of a Priest. The ceremony used was based upon the requirements and standards set by the organised Church in the Middle Ages to ensure a valid ordination conferred by a Bishop who had been consecrated in the line of the Apostolic Succession. This Apostolic Succession is based upon the theory that the "laying on of hands" by a Bishop maintains an unbroken line of "laying on of hands" right down from the Apostles themselves.

However, from our point of view this claim by the organised Church is not entirely true because research can prove that the qualifications and requirements for a valid Priesthood were laid down long before the Christian Era.

The very fact of a Bishop laying his hands upon a person and pronouncing him, or her, a Priest does not in reality constitute the true requirements of Priesthood. A person can only become a Priest by the true flame of the Holy Spirit working within. Just as a marriage ceremony conducted by a Priest does not constitute a true marriage but rather the persons being conjoined by virtue of the perfect unity of the Two Divine Natures within each one of them.

So, a true Priest is the person who is genuinely linked to the Spiritual Hierarchy by virtue of the qualities developed in the effort to set themselves apart for the service of the whole family of mankind and to keep themselves solely as a channel for the ever-flowing fountain of Life which is pure and fresh at every moment in the moment. The true Priest of God is neither bound by sectarian beliefs nor is he or she afraid to break free from the status quo of organised religion which binds the spirit within and ends in spiritual death.

In very Truth, it is the right of every man and woman to become a Priest of the Most High God; to serve by being a channel of the Divine Powers for the whole of Mankind without consideration for any particular religion or belief.

There is a new influx of Spiritual Power and Freedom breaking through at this time - through the dark mists of spiritual crystallisation and slavishness to set dogmas and creeds - and the Holy Hierarchy, or Higher Forces, are awakening the prepared ones to a new Priesthood. Not new in its true sense but new to people of this age. The True Priesthood has existed since the dawn of time and because of the many attempts to stifle its freedom of movement it has now been born free from all suppression and has re-gained its heritage for all those who follow its precepts. Such a Priesthood has been known in the West by the name of the Priesthood of Melchisedek - a priesthood not made with hands but by the Grace and Power of God, the Governing Principle of the Universe.

The New Ekklesia Universal has regained its rightful claim of Succession from the Organised Church who, it could be said, stole it from the ancient pagan Priesthood of old. This was made possible during the early part of this century by what has now come to be known as the Wandering Bishops. It was through these Bishops that most of the Lines of Succession, researched by a well known Gnostic and known as the Right of Succession, were recovered for use by the now Universal Priesthood of the Cosmic Christ.

Whilst the True Priesthood is not a Priesthood conferred by the laying on of hands, its authority is made known by the Bishops, or Hierophants, who are responsible for guidance in a relationship as an Elder to younger Brothers or Sisters within the structure of an Hierarchical system of Divine Operation; as servants to each other for the fulfilling of mankind's purpose on this planet.

The way of service is one of self-sacrifice to the Higher Powers, in the discipline of refraining from any act which would contribute to the mass sub-conscious by self-indulgence, exploitation of others, greed, possession, hatred or a general lack of human feeling for life as a whole.

The True Priest follows a life of learning from others, observing and living according to the highest concept of Perfection available to man. It is not a path for weaklings or for those who are

not ready to share the burden of enlightening others. The more Light we receive - the greater responsibility we have towards each other. As I said, we become servants to mankind and not dictators to its conscience. The way to real freedom is to liberate oneself from all the chains which average humanity has around its ankles. In the work upon one's own nature, by allowing the Divine Spirit to take over, we can eliminate most of our barriers within which bind us, like a prisoner, to the recurring cycles of pain which trouble us again and again. We cannot gain freedom by adhering to any man-made system whether it be a religious system, a fraternal system or even the most high-powered esoteric system. Our final release is discovered in the total abandonment of all systems, all set creeds, opinions and self-attachments - these are our shackles. Freedom lies in Freedom Itself and Wisdom lies in Wisdom Itself. Not until we can abandon ourselves, or commit ourselves totally to the ever-burning fire of Love, can we know what Truth is all about. Whilst we cling to the last vestige of our own concept of Truth we are not Free.

Truth is that which remains when opinions and hypotheses cease; Love is that which is left when all attachment ceases; and Wisdom is the Right use of the precious knowledge we gain in the experience of Life's deeper meanings.

There have been many Great Teachers but many students fall by the way because they make their own assessments of what they believe the Teacher has said. The true Teachers lead the disciple, or younger brethren, to the edge of that which transcends all human thought and every esoteric Principle. The Pupil is then left to discover the Reality of Being for himself and become a Priest forever after the Order of Melchisedek.

THE CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

WOMEN IN THE PRIESTHOOD

With respect to the recognition of the equality of the sexes this so-called modern age is very backward. In the very early communities the Egyptians, Greeks and Celts gave women the right of possession and equality. The movement of women during this time to establish their rights is based upon a sense of inferiority which is the result of the indoctrinations from a masculine dominated society. This is seen in all areas where men hold the dominant positions and power - industry, politics, medicine, science, the arts, education and religion. Although women have made a break through in many of these areas their voice is still largely ignored and it is twice as hard for them to reach the top or carry their point.

It is now evident that women are demanding greater say within the church. They are seeking the right to become priests but are encountering much opposition because the male factor is feeling threatened in its position of power. With regard to the arguments and excuses put forward in favour of an exclusive male priesthood, weak attempts such as "Jesus was a man" can serve only as an insult to an intelligent mind.

Within religion the priesthood has for centuries been a male domain. The established Church was intolerant of the Gnostic groups which ordained women and spread scandal about their rites and offices, and where a woman had psychic and healing abilities she was persecuted and condemned as a witch. Against this kind of background it is easy to see why psychologists find that the majority of women today have a low self-image - it has been programmed into them over a long period of time. Unfortunately, in trying to break this heavy yoke they have fallen into the trap of being like men and are fighting for their rightful position with men's weapons.

For 1700 years the holy scriptures of "Christianity" were writings specially selected during church councils to help back up the dogmas promulgated by the organisation. There are many more writings existing outside the Holy Bible that have been branded apocryphal and pseudographical, with many others deliberately withheld from public view, because they tell another story. In very truth the human mind is so vulnerable to any kind of authoritative indoctrination that it cannot see the truth even when the truth is presented: whatever the long-term beliefs have been it comes to be accepted as "the Gospel Truth", when in fact it might be a mere fragment of fiction originated in the minds of some propaganda machine. Thus, all kinds of excuses are erected to protect the existing status quo whether or not its principles are founded upon the truth.

To admit that the verses of scripture about the role of women as attributed to St. Paul are interpolations, and then to say it is of little importance whether or not these texts are authentic when being used as a basis for an argument for the exclusion of women from the priesthood, is a grave error of judgment.

Many honest researchers have been busy during this last century to unearth the true facts relating to Christianity in general, and, because their findings prove to be a "sore spot" to those who support the accepted tradition, the writings of these people have been deliberately "scandalised" or forced out of existence by those who claim to be in charge of the spiritual lives of others. In fact their "shepherding" could be said to be nothing more than a hoodwink served to protect their own edifice of "comfortability".

Male and female roles are different but equal. For too long we have been accustomed to elevating male roles and functions and belittling the female. In our endeavour to redress the balance we must be careful not to swing too far or mistake what we are endeavouring to do. Again it could be proved from another point of view that women were more important than men, but we will satisfy ourselves in attempting to prove, from the scriptures, that the great teachers recognised women as equals.

An objection raised to women in a priestly role is that at the time of menstruation they are unclean and therefore unfit for such an office. Can we take such a superstitious idea seriously when menstruation is a natural bodily function and God did not make anything unclean as was clearly demonstrated to Peter? (see Acts chapter 10).

Clement of Alexandria, a bishop, circa 180, wrote concerning the rights of women to the priesthood in the Christian Church and because of this he was branded as a "womaniser and seducer": this attitude is still maintained in many ecclesiastical circles today. In purely spiritual matters does it count whether or not it is a male body or a female body through which the Divine Blessings flow into the human realm of experience? Or does it invalidate the Mass when said by a female priest when it is claimed that this ritual is based upon purely masculine Solar Principles? Such are the arguments that go on whilst the masses starve for enlightenment. Is God dead or are his representatives here on earth in such a state of confusion that they cannot read the signs of the times?

In many of the Scriptures women were present when Jesus was giving the most secret of his teachings and, in some of those considered apocryphal, or "gnostic", it was the women who asked most of the questions. It is also interesting to note that it was Mary Magdalene unto whom Jesus first revealed himself after

his Resurrection. St John's Gospel Chapter 11, verse 5 gives an example of how the Love of God (Agape) is given equally to all, male or female, without distinction. Jesus' remarks in Matthew 12:48 and Mark 3:33 (interesting numbers too) also clearly show that even relationships, apart from the sex, are all one in Christ. Jesus made it plain that the Power of God is not, neither can it be, affected by the sex of the body it is expressed through. During the celebration of the Mass the quality can be affected only by the intent and purity of the celebrant. If the Christ Power is affected by the sex of the person it is being channelled through, then it ceases to be All-Powerful.

Both men and women have colluded in producing a false picture of mankind through their misunderstanding of their roles and responsibility in expressing the life that is within them. We have to find the true masculine and feminine expressions within ourself and then bring that forth - eventually finding a correct and perfect balance between the two so that they are expressed as one - then through this one, Christ can be manifest. This Christ is what It is - It ceases to be just that if It becomes biased on either the Masculine or Feminine side of expression. Within the Mass the Christ influence or Presence is "brought into experience" directly to the Host via a change of Consciousness which is Archetypal and thus the physical body cannot affect it. However, both masculine and feminine aspects are present in the Bread and the Wine.

Those whose arguments are based upon the Solar Principle, and are not Solar initiates, have not observed that the Sun is a fusion of Masculine and Feminine energies. This principle is distinctly portrayed in the Ying/Yang symbol from the Far East. The proof of this lies in the evidence - all nature is reliant upon a continual sexing process to maintain expression. As we have said before, the Christ Consciousness never has been, nor ever can be, affected by the person who is pure enough to bring it into expression. The only authority as to who is fit to perform the Sacrament of the Mass lies in the Ekklesia itself and those in charge - the Bishops. If the Bishop is satisfied that his priests have been correctly instructed then he knows that "where two or three are gathered in Christ's name - He is there". Man, in any case turns on his own heaven or hell.

One has to agree that the structure of the ordained ministry is quite a different thing from the spiritual state of being baptised in Christ where there is neither male nor female (Galatians chapter 3), but to draw the conclusion from this that it is not an inherent right for women to take up a vocation within the church is open to debate. In praying the Lord's Prayer - "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven" - we are asking that a reflection of what is established in the realm of spirit be reproduced here: can we then afford to cling rigidly to a pattern which patently does not offer exactly the same opportunities to all on the basis of sex discrimination, when such a distinction is not known within the Christ? Do we, or do we not, truly want that Kingdom on earth?

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THE ROSICRUCIAN "ORDER"



IN the previous lesson we gave a synopsis of the consensus of testimonies offered us regarding the so-called "Great White Brotherhood" by spiritual entities and great mystics who have become able, at times, to dissociate from their lower vehicles, "travel in foreign countries," and bring back to us from the inner sources and contacts some direct information of a logical and credible nature.

2 We have traced the processes and modifications by which the Great Plan extended by the Logos to the Great White Brotherhood was and is developed in the several spheres or world-regions until "ripe" for externalization and manifestation in the 7th sphere, our physical world.

3 At that point we were made aware of the mortal helpers in the Great Work or Magnum Opus; helpers to whom the name of "Lay Brothers of the Rosy Cross," among others, is given. Who associate in definite organization form in order to effect an instrument for the more efficient dissemination of the teachings of the Great Ones in the invisible spheres of consciousness.

4 Here then, are two distinct divisions. The Brethren of the Rosy Cross, who have NO visible place of association, and the Lay Brothers who *do* have a visible organization and visible places of association for greater efficiency in carrying on the Work of the Inner Brethren, to a visible world, amongst visible pupils and students.

5 These visible organizations have existed from time immemorial under various names, sometimes as the inner expression of contemporary state or dominant religions; sometimes as the instrument of historic schools of philosophy.

6 The rites and ceremonies of Osiris, Isis and Attis; the Samothracians, Eleusiniand, Dionysiacs, Mithraics, as well as what are called the Greater and Lesser Mysteries of antiquity can be classed in the generalization. The Gnostics, before their decadence, played their part in the Great Plan and then fell from the lofty ideal that had sustained them and were fairly short lived in consequence.

7 How, when and where the name "Rosy Cross" became adopted and attached must remain one of the mysteries of the Society itself. It is a part of its sacred Tradition. The terms were adopted as expressive of certain usage long before they were permitted to become the well known appellation of the organization itself.

8 There is no documentary evidence of any unbroken line or "Apostolic Succession" in the Fraternity prior to the Christian Era. There are however, documentary and monumental evidences of the use of many of its expressive terms, the common use of its symbols and its essential teachings among widely distributed and divergent peoples and nations geographically distant from each other.

9 While one phase of its continuity, perhaps the most important, has been preserved by the Church from the beginning of the Christian Era to what might be called the renaissance, which was effected by Our Father Christian Rosy Cross or Rosencreutz, the Church itself has long since ceased to be aware of the fact. Only a few realize that the Essence of what constitutes true Rosicrucianism was inextricably a part of the warp and woof of the Christian mystical fabric.

10 None of the visible forms or organizations adopted by the Rosy Cross bore the name of "Order" prior to the advent of Christian Rosy Cross. In fact, we have only fragmentary and disjointed evidences of its existence, although of sufficient reliability to prove that quietly, unostentatiously, the disciples DID maintain *some sort* of existence. Curiously enough, these evidences take the form of old parish names, such as chapels or churches of the Rosy Cross. Parish Registers indicate sodalities for inner instruction in the sacred mysteries, bearing the name. The name itself and its essential symbols being present in ancient stone sculptures, stained glass, bronze and marble memorials and the earliest literature of the more serious type.

11 With the advent of Christian Rosy Cross however, a new cycle set in regarding the history of the Rosy Cross. Christian Rosy Cross positively did NOT create an "Order" of any sort. On his return from his journeyings, which we shall subsequently note, he organized sequentially three Circles composed of but very few members or Brethren. Later on, and after his death the Work took on new impetus and made some slight manifestation in the outer world from which it had kept and HAD BEEN KEPT previously sedulously aloof.

12 With the emergence of the Work of the Lay Brothers of the Rosy Cross there seems to have developed a very definite organization, close upon the original three Circles. Its existence was published to the world under the rather cumbrous but highly expressive name of the "Most Holy Order of the Ruby Rose and the Golden Cross," Ordo Sanctissimus Rubeae Rosae et Aureae Crucis. This title proves two vital facts, namely, that the inner Work or philosophy of the Rosy Cross included both Hermeticism and what was mediaevally called Alchemy. This does not mean however, as so often is falsely and ignorantly imputed, that the Lay Brethren of the Rosy Cross were seeking only to transmute base metals to gold, altho the *method* they used DID pave the way for the birth and development of what we now call chemistry. Through this science actual transmutations *have been performed* in several kinds by reputable chemists and physicists in the laboratories of well known universities.

13 Those early Lay Brothers sought the transformation of the natural man, from a state of Nature to a state of Grace, transmuting his basic, leaden or Saturnine nature into the pure gold of the Soular Nature. The second fact that was proved by the cumbersome title is that the Rosicrucian organization IS and ALWAYS HAS BEEN essentially religious. It cannot be otherwise and remain Rosicrucian as is well understood by those who know the real meaning of the word "Rosicrucian." An organization that uses the superlative "Most Holy" cannot be otherwise than deeply religious and pietistic. The very name therefore, of the Fraternity itself, contradicts the assertions of ill-informed persons of the present day who claim and even advertise that the Rosicrucians are NOT a religious organization.

14 But "religious" in the sense in which the term is used by the Rosicrucians, means the widest, deepest and most liberal interpretation of the word, for Rosicrucianism means the living of a life based upon the sublimated essence of ALL religion.

15 After the publication of the Rosy Cross under the title "Most Holy Order," many imitations sprang up in various parts of the Continent and this specious imitationism has continued to the present day. Most of these irresponsible organizations use the term "Order" after a custom which seemingly became prevalent in the mediaeval period, due to the familiarity with both State and Religious Orders and those of knighthood. Apparently the devisors hoped, by the use of the term "Order" to invest their creations with a dignity they would not otherwise have enjoyed.

16 Perhaps we shall gain a better understanding of the Rosicrucian organization and purpose if, at this point, we devote a few moments to the great medieval Mystic and Churchman from whom our later organizations are privileged to take their name—Christian Rosy Cross or Rosencreutz.

17 By many self-appointed critics, apologists or pseudo-historians we are informed that either he was none other than Johann Valentin Andreas or else a purely fictitious or mythical character. Let us correct this misinformation at once. The name Christian Rosencreutz is, of course, a pseudonym, adopted on two counts, first, because it was and still is, in some religious circles, customary to take a definite name in religion, when assuming the vows preliminary to the life of a religious. Second, because at that time the preservation of one's life often depended upon a certain degree of anonymity. Remember that this was in an age when ecclesiastical hierarchies sought to inhibit any tendency toward the freedom of mind and conscience for which Rosicrucianism primarily stands. Christian Rosencreutz was a REAL character in life, who early sought the way to the realization of an ideal, at an age when few, ordinarily, are given to serious thought.

18 It was due to his adoption of a pseudonym, a custom he impressed upon the followers in his three original Circles, that the tradition was established by virtue of which, each professed member of the Rosy Cross to this day, adopts or receives a pseudonym or esoteric name upon admission to the Fraternity.

19 As a result of the spread of the doctrines of the Albigenses to the North of France, the Low Countries and Germany, groups of the refugees from the Albigensian war gathered in motley groups. Out from one of these groups stood a peculiar character, a man and preacher, small, spare with tanned and weather-beaten face, looking much like a Saracen. Influenced by this character, the nucleus gathered about him, wandered into the Rhon district on the borders of Hesse and Thuringia, where, in the middle of the Thuringian forest stood the grim castle of Garmelshausen. This castle, about which weird legends clustered, was known to be tenanted by a grim, dour, unapproachable family, said to be half pagan and more than once suspected of being brigands.

20 It was even questioned whether the inhabitants of Garmelshausen were Christian at all. It is said that a curious carved figure, evidently imported from some foreign land, occupied a prominent niche in the castle walls, and it was whispered that the tenants at times worshipped it. These tenants were quarrelsome amongst their neighbors and did not hesitate to lay travelers in ambush and rob them.

21 Germany at this time, had been subject to the fanaticism of Conrad of Marburg, the Dominican, envoy of Pope Gregory IX. Tors, a fellow Dominican helped to carry on Marburg's work, assisted by a Layman named Jeans who had but one eye. With this one eye however, he claimed to have been endowed with the gift, or ability rather, to detect a heretic from a true believer. He claimed to see within the grim walls of Garmelshausen heretics ripe for the torture.

22 At any rate, due to his efforts, Landgrave Conrad of Thuringia who had just wrecked the little town of Willensdorf laid siege to the castle of Garmelshausen, making savage assaults at intervals over a period of several years. Meantime, the family of Garmelshausen due to the untiring efforts of an ascetic monk who had quarters in the chapel, had been converted to the mysticism of Albigensianism, including reincarnation. The castle fell, the family were assassinated, all but the ascetic monk, who fled in time, taking with him the little Christian von Garmelshausen to whose precocious and amazing intelligence the monk had been strongly attracted. The monk turned out to be an Albigensian adept from Languedoc. The monk, with the child who was then five years old, took refuge in a nearby monastery, entering the boy under a name suggested by the child himself, as Christian Rosencreutz. Here the lad was educated, being well instructed in Latin and Greek.

23 At the youthful age of fifteen, with four other monks of the community, Rosencreutz formed a group, the object of which was to seek truth at any cost or risk. They decided on the east, whence all great religious roots had sprung. Two of them, Rosencreutz and a Brother whose initials only, P. A. L., are available, started out and gave as a pretext a pilgrimage to the Holy Sepulchre. Their

real reason was to seek a centre of initiation, the name of which, as well undoubtedly as the promptings to the trip and even the formation of their little Fraternity, was given them by the ascetic monk who had entered Rosencreutz into the monastery and who had remained faithful to his family charge over the youth. The name of the destination was given them as "The Abode of Wise Men." P. A. L. died in Cyprus. Rosencreutz continued on alone, wearing the garb, and adopting the manners of a Mussulman pilgrim after leaving Christian territory.

24 Rosencreutz reached Damascus. Many writers have ventured the opinion that the word Damcar the name of the place to which Rosencreutz was destined, was made up from Damascus and Cairo. This is not the case. Damcar was an ancient center of Arabian learning. But he reached Damascus first and found it crowded, for the Persians and other Far Easterners had fled from the Mongol incursions and had sought sanctuary in Damascus, which is today, the most ancient inhabited city in the world. Here Rosencreutz took up the studies of Maimonides, Ghazali, Mazoudi, learned his Omar Khayyam, meditated on the Masnavi or sacred books of the Sufis, studied Euclid and astronomy under Nazir Eddin.

25 From Damascus Rosencreutz went to Damcar in pursuit of still higher wisdom, but, remaining here for some years, he discovered that wisdom is absorbed only by a slow process. Damcar was situated on one of the highest points in Arabia, a place, curiously enough, occupied by T. E. Lawrence in his comparatively recent exploits in that country. It was at Damcar that his real inner life began and he received the visions that stimulated his subsequent career and brought out the principles that have constituted the basis for the Rosicrucian concept of Cosmos. Lawrence mentions much the same experience while sojourning in that now lonely spot.

26 Leaving Damcar, Rosencreutz went to Egypt, thence to Fez. It was in Egypt, in Cairo, that Rosencreutz gained his complete conception of the part Hermeticism was to play in the philosophy that was to grow from seed sown by him later on. In Fez, called the city of six hundred playing fountains, one of the last of the truly ancient schools of astrology still flourished and although some modern wiseacres claim that Rosicrucianism takes no notice of astrology, such claims are usually made for membership purposes, or else as revelations of their authors' ignorance. Astrology as taught by the ancients was an exact science and was quite another thing from the fortune-telling process and usage of today. Rosencreutz studied under Abou Yusuf, which is Arabic for Joseph and perfected his knowledge of the hidden forces of nature.

27 In due time, Rosencreutz felt the call to his own land and he came across the Mediterranean to Spain. Here he became a member of the Alumbrados, a society formed under Arabic influence, which devoted itself, strange to say, to the mysticism of the Neo-Platonists. Here he learned more about the search for the Philosopher's Stone, for the Alumbrados devoted much time to the writings of Artepheus.

28 His wide travels and wanderings were impressing one salient truth upon Rosencreutz, namely, that the path to wisdom is a rugged one, with many turns, by slow stages and through unknown territory. All this is significant when we remember that Rosencreutz was as yet only a precocious youth. Yet it was here that he laid the foundations for an occult group which was to be secret, bound by a really terrible oath to compel obedience not to himself but to the principles for which the organization was to be affected and to continue as such a close bound body for three centuries without being known to the outer world except thru vague rumors. He passed back thru France at the same time when the mystical and rather mysterious Marguerite Porete was burned in Paris.

29 Reaching Germany, he became secretly a member of the "Brothers of the Free Spirit," claiming that man was a "Fragment of God and must, after many lives, return to the divine essence. "This body was composed as now, by a

group committed to the Yoga practices of the Hindus and called themselves "Friends of God," affirming the necessity of release from desire. Against these two bodies the Church waged its persecutions most intensively. Rosencreutz was disgusted with affairs as he found them in his native land. He went back to his boyhood ground of Thuringia and sought out the three monks who had been his companions in his earlier studies. The four organized a group, later increased to eight, all Germans, who formed the first real group of medieval Rosicrucian initiates. He gave to them the best of what he had gathered in his travels. Perhaps the statement that all were Germans is inaccurate, for one of them, although suspected of German parentage, under the initials L. A. came from Languedoc.

30 According to the Fama Fraternitatis, Brother I. A. returned to Southern France and endeavored to found the Fraternity there. No records exist as to his success and only tradition indicates his death near Narbonne. Of his later years, little is known of Rosencreutz except that he was the inspiration of Jean de Mechin who did wonderful work in High Germany and in Brussels. He was the source of power of the renowned Blomert, the mystic woman who performed marvelous cures, and whose disciples claimed that they saw on each side of her a seraph who directed her. Rosencreutz was the mysterious visitor who most affected Johann Tauler, a celebrated Doctor of Theology and to whom the learned of Europe came to listen at Strasbourg.

31 Of the death of Rosencreutz, reputedly in 1484, we have only the traditions bequeathed us by the Fraternity. From this source we understand that his demise occurred at the age of 106, and that it was near Nuremberg. It is known however, that Rosencreutz in his later years went, with others of his monastic order to England where many had found comparative sanctuary. This great Christian Mystic was buried amongst other equally Christian mystics in a final haven which was said to have been discovered in 1604. At this time the "Vault was Opened," seemingly by accident like that of the ancient Hiram. Only in this instance the body was found to be in a state of perfect preservation. This is a claim that has been made for many other highly spiritualized leaders, especially among the Mohammedans. It is difficult for us to sift fact from tradition at this late date and we can only say that seemingly miraculous preservation of human bodies over a long period of time has frequently been observed, due to conditions of burial, climate, and chemical state of the soil. The Vault of Rosencreutz is said to have been of mystically geometrical formation, and the 120 years elapsed between the burial and later discovery has an interesting parallel. Moses, liberator of the Hebrews, died on lonely Mount Nebo, "but of his sepulchre no man knoweth unto this day." He died at the symbolic age of 120 years and "HIS eyesight was not dimmed nor his natural force abated." The same secrecy, the same preservation, one in life, the other in death.

32 In 1413 Frater I.O. died in England, and later Frater P.D. In 1415 the second circle was formed and in 1459 Rosencreutz wrote the Hermetic Romance.

33 We shall not attempt, at this time, to carry out further chronological events. 1610 brings us to the date of the Fama Fraternitatis. It was later printed at Cassel in 1614 and in 1615 it was reprinted at Frankfurt, with the Confessio of the Fraternity. With the publication of these two works, "addressed to the learned of Europe," but containing little that was not already known by those who really KNEW anything at all about the Fraternity, a veritable storm of interest was aroused. Scholars and philosophers of high degree were attracted, as well as the usual motley herd of imitators, charlatans and impostors, the parasites who are ever ready to nourish themselves on worthy works of those whom, at best, they can only imitate and that badly. Every pseudo-philosopher and alchemist assumed the name Rosicrucian and some of their serious works and attempts have even held the interest of researchers down to the present time.

34 It was at this time that "Orders" of all sorts, loudly proclaiming themselves to be Rosicrucian, sprang up. Their blatant claims and absurd propaganda exist

even unto this day, but as the bray of the ass in the lions' hide betrayed its identity, the same conditions prevail today. Think for a moment and decide for yourself whether this statement is true. The original Fraternity compelled observance of three specific rules for the life guidance of its Brethren. The first was unselfishness. Now nobody is unselfish. Those who have achieved a halo for apparent unselfishness are only less selfish than others. The reason is simple. There are only two real states. Selfishness or selflessness. No example exists to our knowledge in modern society of a man who has voluntarily given up real riches and passed unostentatiously into poverty. There are those who have given up riches to pose as philanthropists or to enter religious foundations, after bequeathing their riches to the foundation of which they were becoming members, but not one who has shown a PREFERENCE for poverty to riches. One man alone stands out—Tolstoy—who decided just before he died to become a wandering beggar, but his decision came too late.

35 The second rule was absence of pride. Here again, nobody is without pride and the trouble with most of us is that we have far too much pride at best and too much false pride at worst. For the average man or woman, unaffected, retiring modesty is too much to expect. We all want to be regarded at our best and given credit for what we ourselves think we are really worth. The modern manias of inferiority complexes are due to this secret fear that we are not being evaluated at our true worth. Yet the Rosicrucian was instructed to remain or to pass unnoticed as much as possible, never priding himself on his knowledge and to eschew vanity as far as in his power lies. Who amongst our modern society prefers anonymity in place of recognition?

36 The third rule was chastity. This requires interpretation. Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato and the Alexandrine Philosophers insisted on chastity but none of them were chaste as the moralists interpret the word. Chastity to them meant abstinence from excess and a preventive against the waste developed by orgiastic licence. They regarded the natural and primal urges and impulses as forces to be used and enjoyed but not abused, just as we enjoy eating, which, for that reason should not be prohibited and could not be prohibited without disaster to health and life itself. None of the natural forces can be inhibited but waste of energy and unlimited licence are decidedly unchaste. Yet to what degree do we find human society in any age stopping in its mad haste for pleasure to consider whether the energy developed is going to be charged to profit or to wastage?

37 Just apply these three rules to claimants to be called Rosicrucians, a claim which was and IS absolutely prohibited by the Fraternity. You will not be long in deciding as to the merits of such claims. The man or the woman who is known by associates to be crassly vain and selfish, or who cannot avoid backward glances over their shoulders to see that the spot light of publicity or attention is focussed upon them, or who waste their energies in ANY form of devitalizing pleasures are decidedly NOT Rosicrucian. Nor are the so-called "Orders" of which they proclaim themselves members. A good tree bringeth forth GOOD fruit.

38 We have been asked to give a definition of the term "Rosicrucianism" and this seems to be the place and time.

ROSICRUCIANISM IS THE PHILOSOPHY OF CONSTRUCTIVE LIVING APPLIED TO MAN, MENTALLY, PHYSICALLY, AND SPIRITUALLY.

This is the most concise definition we can give and it is based entirely upon the teachings and the injunctions of our Father Christian Rosencreutz. In this philosophy, all that pertains to the origin, existence and future estate of man is studied, through the several departments of physical, mental and spiritual science in order that by understanding his position in the creative scheme man may know his individual part in the Great Plan that is continually being worked out. Thus he is aligning himself consciously and conscientiously with all the divine forces engaged therein, as doing the Father's Will, surrendering his own will to the Divine in as near absorption therein as he individually can accomplish and attain.

39 The Rosicrucian organization then, as it stands to day, uses the term which it has preponderantly used since its emergence from the secrecy which prevailed during the first to the fifteenth centuries of the Christian era. That term is "SOCIETY" or, as many of our earlier Brethren wrote it, in preference to the more cumbersome Latin, "Our Honorable Society." It is not an Order in any sense that would apply to what are now called "Orders" and the use of this term implies something that the Fraternity decidedly is not. Through the Society in its modern form have become available the original findings of Christian Rosencreutz and his immediate successors, which writings in their earliest form were confined to the Latin and most of which have never been translated into English.

40 These teachings of the gathered wisdom of Rosencreutz and his first co-workers, constitute what are known as the Egyptian Wisdom Teachings. Yet strange to say, Rosencreutz did not get them from Egypt although he sojourned there for some time. The initiates and students whom he met, in small number in Cairo, were disciples of the Graeco-Alexandrine heritages. Egypt, under Islamic misrule and the revolt of the Mamelukes was engaged in the struggle against the Ottoman Sultanate that eventuated in the absorption of Egypt in the Ottoman Empire. Naturally, scholarship was at a low ebb in such a political turmoil and Rosencreutz met only the few who were keeping the lamps of wisdom burning low.

41 Christian Rosy Cross derived his knowledge of the Egyptian Wisdom Religion from the Arabians whilst sojourning in that country. The Arabians had transliterated many of the hieratic symbols into definite significance. They had also, to a considerable extent, become the custodians of that Wisdom Religion and the Greater and Lesser Mysteries, through earlier scholars of their race who lived in Egypt during the later Empire and who had arranged the Secret Wisdom as it was even then known into the Tabula. This Tabula gives us the general plan of the world regions, planes, natures and properties of each, together with the threefold constitution of man, a concept which the Egyptians had carried on to a high degree of intelligible understanding.

42 This wisdom and the Damascene learning acquired, Rosencreutz carried back to Germany where it became a foundation stone for the subsequent Teutonic mysticism of the deeper sort. Not all of this was given out even in Germany, so far as making it available to the many was concerned. The first, and perhaps the only complete assemblage of Rosencreutz's acquirements was that accomplished by Robertus de Fluctibus or Robert Fludd commonly known as "The Great English Rosicrucian," in his masterly Opera in eight Tomes, all in excellent Latin.

43 At first, the meetings of the Rosicrucian organization or "Our Society" were conducted along the routine of the monastery offices, but as years passed, due to ecclesiastical persecution a different basis was sought. Instead of the monastic offices of the Church, a system of degrees was instituted. First, they began with a simple form of the presentation of the newly elected Candidate before the Altar, where he made his vows of secrecy and applied for the recognition of the Imperator and the right to don the garb of a Brother. As this primitive form became amplified, Chancellor von Eckhartshausen introduced an elaborate system of degrees based upon the Hebrew Kabala, which it was felt would sufficiently disguise the philosophy inculcated by the Society. The net result was that it almost obscured the philosophy and introduced a complexity that made for misunderstanding and led many to devote themselves to the Kabala rather than to the Christian mystical essence Rosencreutz had implanted.

44 So, in the early sixties of the last century, these kabbalistic rituals were considerably modified to bring them within the comprehension of modern thought. Rosicrucianism itself, aside from all ritual, is a synthesis of religion, science and philosophy, seeking the least common denominator as it were, of all three. For this reason, since its first formation as a definite school of thought, it has been elastic, ready to embrace all that progressive thought developed of merit while sifting the chaff from the good grain. While never numerically large, the Rosicrucian School has absorbed many cults whose existence therefore was but transitory while at the same time, it has preserved its own identity steadfastly refusing to be absorbed by any.

45 One of the notable features of Rosicrucianism is its healing work. A work which the Brethren were obligated to engage in without fee or compensation of any kind. It is still maintained by the Brethren, although with greater difficulty for the early Brethren were able through the community residence of what were called their "Great Houses" to maintain a continual stream of healing afflatus. Today, the membership being composed for the greater part of busy men and women, living in many cases widely separated, the work is maintained at National Group Headquarters. Directed from thence it is powerfully successful and has achieved marvelous results. This healing work is constantly expanding its scope of vital power and influence and is bringing new hope, health and happiness to numberless seekers.

46 In the previous lecture, we stated that those in mortal expression were known as the Lay Brothers of the Rosy Cross. Of these Lay Brothers there are two general divisions. The Associate students who receive the teachings and seek for personal unfoldment wheresoever they may be placed in life, and second, the Collegiate members who, by united effort, provide opportunity for those who are so minded to become not only students but active workers in the propagandive work of the Society and co-operators in its various departments of activity. Christian Rosencreutz was a recurrent expression of a Great Soul from among the Greater or Superior Masters, who has visited this plane from time to time for the introduction of a higher measure of thought and vision when the existent stream had become muddled by the accumulation of Superstition and materialistic tradition, like barnacles on the hull of a noble ship. With each such advent, human consciousness has taken a distinctly higher trend into which those whose mental and spiritual capacities have, by the law of Attraction, been drawn.

47 Those who associate with the Society today for the intellectual stimulus will find their wish gratified but the intellectual always leaves something to be desired. Those who associate with the Society in the knowledge that by so doing they have the opportunity of training to become recognized helpers and co-operators with the Brethren of the Rosy Cross in the hinterland of consciousness have a higher ideal, a worthier goal, but correspondingly harder work although even the increased effort brings its own peculiar and very special reward and encouragement. Rosicrucianism has far greater depths than appear on the surface or to the superficial observer, like a pool so clear that the clarity of the waters makes its apparent depth seem deceptive.

48 The Frater or Soror who understands that Rosicrucianism is not all confined to the pages of text books or to ritualistic observances but includes the living of a definitely and carefully planned life of constructive purpose, realizes that he is also on a specific Path that leads to a supreme goal, over which many of the world's most brilliant thinkers, creators and leaders have passed and that he is in excellent company.

49 There is an old Latin motto ascribed to Terence,—"*Homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto.*" ("I am a man, and nothing that concerns a man do I deem a matter of indifference to me.") St. Augustin informs us that on hearing these words of the poet the theatre resounded with applause. This saying might well be the general motto of the Rosicrucian Society for its researchive work is so inclusive that nothing that pertains to man, his past, his present or his future is a matter of indifference to the Society. The subject of the Society's work IS man. The object of its Art is the perfection and improvement of man, his transformation from a state of nature to a state of grace. Whether the student is at first taught to study man as an aggregation of chemical elements, later as a depository of mental reactions and urges, and finally as a spiritual synthesis of them all, he is also taught never to forget that he is human and that it is not his mission to aspire to wings and harps here but to be 100% efficient as a human being in order to qualify a vehicle for the highest expression of the eternal spirit within him.

50 At the beginning, the neophyte or young plant as the newly recognized Frater is termed, is not informed that he is a Lay Brother of the Rosy Cross. He is not—as yet. He must become so gradually in his consciousness, after he has passed a definite probationary period. Then, if he persists conscientiously in the Work that is offered to him, he not only KNOWS but he is also INFORMED

authoritatively of the rank to which he has attained. Yet he never proclaims himself to be such. *In fact no true Rosicrucian ever claims himself to be one*, much less admits it for while it is perfectly permissible and quite desirable now that the Society is discharging a broad humanitarian mission to admit that one is a MEMBER of the Rosicrucian Society, it is decidedly presumptuous to proclaim one's self a Rosicrucian. There is a difference which will be easily apparent to the thoughtful. A man may admit himself to be a student in an academic institution, but it is not good breeding or modesty to proclaim one's self a scholar. The world will set its own appraisal in either case.

51 Of sources of information regarding the Society, there are none that are reliable outside the Society itself. Encyclopaedic information is misleading. For the most part it consists of the usual mythos regarding the Fraternity and the stories common to all reports and thus to some extent agreeing. Then there is a mass of well-intentioned but wholly misleading matter prepared by would-be apologists and pseudo-historians regarding an history they know little or nothing about. Finally, there is the deceptive matter prepared by modern charlatans and worked into some encyclopaedias due to the editorial ignorance of the subject. Many books of reference solemnly assure their public that the Rosicrucians were a purely, or possibly impurely mythical cultus with no tangible existence.

52 The Rosicrucian Society has never, in the entire course of its existence, permitted its members to wear outward jewels or to expose anything of the sort to gain attention or credence from the outer world. Certain jewels ARE to be worn, but the initiated member alone knows how and when they may be identified.

53 Today, the Society is secret only in two things, its Secret or Esoteric Work of individual development, and the ritual observances of Collegiate functions. Otherwise its existence and its message are not only made known to the whole wide world, but better still, teachings once obtainable only with great difficulty are now available to anyone who sincerely desires to make their individual start upon the Path.

54 In a lesson of this length, it is impossible to make more than brief excursus into the identity and purpose of the Rosicrucian Society, mistakenly called by some, "Order". It would require many lessons to cover the subject taking up its individual features specifically and in detail. We can only hope in this paper or thesis to give an *outline* of the Fraternity.

55 One thing we must emphasize at this time. Those who look upon Rosicrucianism as something so sacrosanct that it means lowered gaze and solemn mien, are quite mistaken. Bulwer Lytton, an earlier Frater of the Society, wrote that "The Rosicrucians are not at all gloomy or morbid, on the contrary they are extremely sociable." And we may say that all whom we have met who could be considered as genuinely representative of the best ideals of the Society, have fortunately been blessed with a keen sense of humor and fully lived up to Lytton's representation. The ethical ideal of the Society is unusually high and if a member fails to live up to it and thus misrepresents his Society, that is not the fault of the organization but a demonstration of the weakness of the individual or his inability to exemplify the principles he has espoused.

56 We are all pitifully human. We say "pitifully" advisedly, for we are as yet so far from what we should be; from what we are destined to be and CAN become. Rosicrucianism is a system of living and thinking that is adapted to assist nature in her evolutionary process of human unfoldment and it begins by teaching exactly what evolution IS from the higher standpoint and then how to go about it. It is so elastic that all that is good in other schools or systems of thought will be found to be fundamental in Rosicrucianism not because it adopts each new idea but because it teaches alignment with that vast archaëus of the Universal Mind, wherefrom we can draw all that is best and proper for us to have as fast as we develop the capacity for it, the ability to use it and the faculties for understanding it. Man is not given the use of the great natural forces and energies, unless and until by hard study and research he develops also the ability to use them constructively. It is a part of nature's economy not to put the tools or instruments of suicide into the hands of the careless or ignorant.

57 Many legends have grown up around the tradition of Rosicrucianism, some of exquisite beauty. They have even run into poetry of an unusually high order that has found a place among the immortals of literature. In some of these legends we observe a singular agreement as to the discovery of hidden sanctuaries where have been found lamps burning for centuries without tending or replenishment. The stories are good. We shall not discuss their probability. It may however with excellent profit be pointed out that after all there IS such a thing as the hidden sanctuary of the human heart, whose depths we had not hitherto discovered. Perhaps an accidental crisis, a problem, a necessity or a happy unfoldment and revelation helped us to discover it. When it opened to our astonished vision we also noted a strong, pure light burning therein, a light that is not of this world but whose rays reach out into this world and make this old world a bit happier. It may be, it just may possibly be the light of genuine love; it might just possibly be the light of good deeds; it might be the light of warm human sympathy. We do not say what it is in each individual discovery for there are many kinds of light now known to science. There are many kinds of rays, and all the time we are discovering rays increasingly powerful and penetrating and we are also beginning to discover more and more of the properties of the rays we have always thought we knew all about. So, the old legends MAY have some foundation in fact as do all legends when run to their basis. And to those who would like to know more about these caverns of the secret metals of Hermes wherein the mystic light glows on and on through many recurrent lives, growing brighter with each incarnation and brighter and brighter IN each incarnation itself as we develop a better vehicle, a better lamp, we can only say, in the words of the illuminated Sendivogius, "IF THAT WHICH THOU SEEKEST THOU FINDEST NOT WITHIN THYSELF, THOU WILT NEVER FIND IT WITHOUT THEE." It is not necessary for us of today to scour the four ends of the earth looking for wisdom. It is beside us and all about us if we will but open our vision, broaden our minds beyond academic ruts and denominational boundaries and let truth—truth at any price, enter into our hearts. Then,—maybe—that little lamp within will begin to send forth its rays into our consciousness and out through OUR consciousness into that of others and ultimately into the great wide world.

58 The atom is the tiniest and humblest thing we know of. BUT IT IS THE CORNER STONE OF ALL CREATION. There is something like that atom in each one of us but we must search for it. It MIGHT be some sort of a STONE and, if found, it may be discovered to have the properties of Aladdin's fabled Lamp, another and beautiful eastern analogy of the western concept of the Hidden Flame.

59 Wisdom doth not proclaim herself. She wraps herself up in humble form. She is not to be found on display. She is to be sensed and recognized only within. Truth, beauty, power, wisdom and inner health, those are the jewels the Rosicrucian is permitted to wear and to display as far as he is able. And when we find such a one we may be sure he is living the life and on the Path that has been trodden by the sages of the ages.